"Gone to the Drinking House over the Way."

1st The room was so cold, so cheerless and bare,
With its rickety table and one broken chair,
And its curtainless windows with scarcely a pane,
To keep out the snow, the wind and the rain.

2nd A cradle stood empty pushed up to the wall
And somehow that seemed the saddest of all.
In the old rusty stove the fire was dead;
There was snow on the floor at the foot of the bed.

3rd And there all alone a pale woman was lying,
You need not look twice to see she was dying
Dying of want, of hunger and cold,
Shall I tell you her story, — the story she told?

4th "No ma'am I'm no better my cough is so bad;
It's wearing me out though, and that makes me glad.
For it's wearisome living when one's all alone,
And heaven they tell one is just like a home.

5th "Yes ma'am I've a husband he's somewhere about;
I hoped he'd come in fore the fire went out;
But I guess he has gone where he's likely to stay,
I mean to the drinking house over the way."

6th
It was not so always, I hope you won't think
Too hard of him, Lady – it's only the drink.
I know he's kind-hearted, for oh, how he cried –
For our poor little baby the morning it died.

7th
You see he took sick-then, and grew every bad,
And we had no doctor, – (my poor little lad!)
For his father had gone, never meaning to stay –
I am sure – to the drinking-house over the way.

8th
But when he came back, 'twas far in the night –
And I was so tired, and sick with the fright –
Of staying so long with my baby alone,
And it crying my heart with its pitiful moan.

9th
He was cross with the drink, poor fellow, I know –
It was that – not his baby that bothered him so;
But he swore at the child, as panting it lay,
And went back to the drinking-house over the way.

10th
I heard the gate slam and heart seemed to freeze
Like ice in my bosom, and there on my knees –
By the side of the cradle, all shivering I stayed;
I wanted my mother, I cried, and I prayed.

11th
The clock it struck two, ere my baby was still
And my thoughts they went back to my home on the hill
Where my happy girlhood had spent its short day –
Far, far from that drinking-house over the way.

12th "Could I be that girl? I the heart-broken wife —
There watching alone, while that dear little life
Was going so fast that I had to bend low
To hear if he breathed — 'twas so faint and so slow.

13th "Yes it was easy his dying, he just grew more white,
And his eyes opened wider to look for the light —
As his father came in, 'twas just break of day,
Came in from the drinking house over the way.

14th Yes ma'am he was sober, at least mostly I think,
He often stayed that way to wear off the drink;
And I know he was sorry for what he had done,
For he set a great store by our first little son.

15th And straight did he come to the cradle bed where
Our baby lay dead, so pretty and fair;
I wonder that I could have wished him to stay
When there was a drinking house over the way.

16th He stood quiet awhile, did not understand —
You see ma'am, 'till he touched the little cold hand,
Oh, then came the tears, and he shook like a leaf,
And said 'twas the drinking had made all the grief.

17th The neighbors were kind, and the minister came,
And he talked of my seeing my baby again;
And of the bright angels, — I wonder if they —
Could see into that drinking house over the way.

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